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I. SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS EUROPEAN NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE HELD AT AUSTRIA CENTRE, VIENNA ON 23 AND 24 AUGUST 1993

The Seventh United Nations European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held at the Austria Centre, Vienna on 23 and 24 August 1993 under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Symposium had as its theme: "The Middle East process; Palestinian rights and development - a challenge to Europe".

The Symposium was convened in response to General Assembly resolution 46/74 A of 11 December 1991. The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising: Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; Mr. Alcibiades Hidalgo Basulto (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and, Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations.

A total of 38 non-governmental organizations attended the Symposium, 15 as observers. Several observers from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations bodies were also present.

The opening meeting was addressed by Mr. Cissé, who chaired the opening and closing sessions. Statements were also made by Mr. Faisal Aweidah, Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations at Vienna who read a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). A statement was also made by Mr. Bernard Mills, Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP), who acted as Symposium moderator.

The programme was drawn up by the Committee in consultation with the ECCP.

A plenary session took place entitled "Palestine - the current situation". Presentations were made by: Mr. Haidar Abdel Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace talks; Mrs. Naomi Chazan, member of the Knesset; and, Mr. Johan Nordenfelt, Director of Programmes against Apartheid and for Palestinian Rights in the United Nations Secretariat.

Two workshops were held on the following topics: Palestinian national and human rights; and, Palestinian development.

Closing statements were made by Mr. Mills and Mr. Cissé.

The Symposium adopted a final declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops and elected a new European Coordinating Committee. The report of the Symposium has been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights. The declaration read as follows:

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Declaration

"We, the representatives of the non-governmental organizations participating in the Seventh United Nations European NGO Symposium, held at the Austria Centre at Vienna on 23-24 August 1993, reaffirm our support to the Palestinian people and their courageous intifadah and their just and incessant struggle for self-determination and the establishment of their own independent sovereign State of Palestine.

"The experience of the two years that have passed since the launching in Madrid of talks between Arabs and Israelis has reinforced our conviction that peace will not come until the Palestinian people, through their representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), are enabled to determine their own future. Serious negotiations have yet to begin and the terms of reference of these talks, particularly United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), have yet to be honoured.

"Worse, despite the ongoing peace talks the situation has further deteriorated in the occupied Palestinian territories. This has been documented in the reports and papers presented by eminent panelists and resource persons:

"(a) From the beginning of the peace talks to this day an ever-growing number of civilians is being killed and injured by the Israeli occupying military forces and undercover units;

"(b) The continuing arrests and torture of Palestinians exacerbate the already intolerable human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPTs);

"(c) In December 1992, 415 Palestinians were deported to the Israeli-Lebanese border and in spite of the world-wide outcry Israel has refused to comply with United Nations Security Council resolution 799 (1992) calling for their immediate return and 396 deportees are still encamped on the Lebanese border as we are meeting;

"(d) The recent closure of the territories is the latest manifestation of illegal collective punishment. It has divided Palestine into four parts, separating the South and the North of the West Bank and isolating the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, and severely restricting the movement of the Palestinian population of two million people. The road blocks have created enclaves, depriving the people living in them of access to family, work, schools and medical care. This has been the most damaging and disruptive policy of the occupying power since 1967;

"(e) In spite of the Israeli Government's announcement of a settlement freeze, there are at the moment more than 19,500 housing units under construction and highways and roads are continuously being built to link settlements with one another and with the State of Israel;

"(f) House demolitions have increased; in the Gaza Strip more than 50 houses have been blown up by anti-tank rockets.

"We condemn all the above mentioned Israeli policies and practices which violate the Fourth Geneva Convention. We urge the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to decide ways and means to ensure Israel's compliance with the aforesaid Convention, according to United Nations Security Council resolution 681 (1990).

"We call upon the European Governments and the European Community (EC) to take all necessary political and economic measures in order to impose on Israel the respect of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We demand that the EC freeze all economic and scientific protocols and preferential agreements with Israel until it complies.

"We are deeply concerned about the stalemate in the Palestinian-Israeli talks. Without a Palestinian-Israeli agreement, there can be no real movement in either the bilateral or multilateral talks. We note that concessions to facilitate negotiations have been made by the Palestinians with no meaningful response from the Israelis.

"We note with dismay the biased attitude of the current Administration of the United States of America, which came into the open during the ninth and tenth rounds of talks. We believe the United States of America has a responsibility, now that it is effectively the only sponsor, to respect the terms of reference of the Madrid process which require full implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

"We support the call in successive United Nations resolutions for an international peace conference with the participation of the five (5) permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing and with equal rights in order to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

"We reiterate our support for all Israeli NGOs and peace forces, which have undertaken the hard task of raising the awareness of Israeli society in support of Palestinian national and human rights.

"At the same time we call attention to the on-going discrimination by the Israeli government and local authorities against the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

"We strongly condemn Israel's military raids against Lebanese villages and Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon that have caused the death of 150 civilians, the injury of hundreds and made thousands homeless. We urge the Security Council to ensure that Israel fully complies with Security Council resolution 425 (1978) which provides for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon.

"We, as European NGOs, call upon our Governments and particularly upon the European members of the Security Council to lend their full support to efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and to take action to end a situation which perpetuates injustice and threatens the security of Europe. Peace cannot prevail in the area until Israel complies with all United Nations resolutions and withdraws from the OPTs, Lebanon and the Golan Heights.

"We, the European NGOs, welcome the Palestine development plan (PDP) and pledge ourselves to sustain and encourage all Palestinian efforts in the field of development. We shall urge European and other Governments, United Nations bodies, etc., through all channels and all levels to respond to Palestinian needs.

"We, the European NGOs, aware of the urgency of the situation, pledge to intensify our concerted efforts for the achievement of our objectives as outlined in this declaration and the conclusions and recommendations included in the two workshop reports appended to this declaration.

"We express our appreciation to the International Coordinating Committee for Non-governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) and the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine (NACC) for their peace conference information project; to the Coordinating Committee of International Non-governmental Organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (CCINGO) for its reports on the human rights situation in the OPTs, and for the services rendered by the Network for European Non-governmental Organizations in the Occupied Territories (NENGOOT) in the field of development. All these information services have facilitated the work of the ECCP and individual NGOs.

"We warmly thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this Symposium and for its relentless and continuous efforts to enable the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights. We request its chairman H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé to convey this declaration to the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-eighth session as part of the Committee's report and we request the convening of a European Symposium in 1994.

"We extend our thanks to the Division of Palestinian Rights, its secretariat, the various departments and offices of the United Nations Office at Vienna and the interpreters who assisted us.

"We wish to thank the Austrian Government for hosting this Symposium at Vienna and making available the Austria Centre for our deliberations."

II. TENTH UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE HELD AT VIENNA FROM 25 TO 27 AUGUST 1993

The Tenth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held at the Austria Center, Vienna, from 25 to 27 August 1993 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 A, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; Mr. Alcibiades Hidalgo Basulto (Cuba), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

The Meeting was attended by representatives of 79 non-governmental organizations from all regions of the world; 6 such organizations participated as observers. Nineteen panellists made presentations. Representatives of a number of Governments, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations, as well as the representatives of the NGO regional coordinating committees, also attended the Meeting as observers.

His Excellency, Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, chaired the opening and closing sessions of the Meeting. The opening session was also addressed by His Excellency Mr. Wolfgang Wolte, Deputy-Secretary-General and Director-General for European Integration and Economic Policy in the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Don Betz, Chairman, International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the question of Palestine (ICCP), acted as moderator of the Meeting.

The programme for the Meeting, on the theme "Renewing the United Nations-NGO Commitment to Palestinian National and Human Rights", was drawn up by the Committee in consultation with the International Coordinating Committee as follows:

Panel 1. Political Update: Obstacles to Peace

Mr. Haidar Abdel Shafi (Palestinian)
Mrs. Naomi Chazan (Israel)
Mr. Naseer Aruri (United States of America)

Panel 2. Urgent Quest for Independence: Protection and End of Occupation

Mr. Pablo de la Vega (Ecuador)
Mr. Raji Sourani (Palestinian)
Mr. Avigdor Feldman (Israel)
Mr. Mohammed Ali Taha (Palestinian)
Mr. Hussein Abu Hussein (Israel)

Panel 3. Back to the Future - A Decade of United Nations/ NGO Networking

Mr. Jean Marie Lambert (France)
Ms. Adrien Wing (United States of America)
Mr. Hans-Peter Kotthaus (UNRWA)
Mr. Romesh Chandra (India)
Mr. Akira Uriu (UNIDO);

Panel 4. NGO Forum: Who is doing what?

Mrs. Samiha Khalil (Palestinian)
Mr. Fritz Froehlich (Austria)
Mrs. Ruth Cohen (Israel)
Mr. Jim Graff (Canada);

Panel 5. Future Strategies and the Role of NGOs

Mr. Don Betz (United States of America)
Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestinian).

The NGOs participating in the Meeting adopted a Final Declaration as well as action-oriented proposals and elected a new International Coordinating Committee. The report of the Meeting will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

The Declaration adopted by participant NGOs read as follows:

Declaration

"We, the Non-Governmental Organizations gathered at the Tenth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine are aware that we have convened at a critical moment in the struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom and statehood.

"We unconditionally affirm the right of the Palestinian people to return, self-determination and statehood. We affirm our conviction that the establishment of an independent Palestinian State alongside Israel is the most suitable means for securing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

"We call upon the Israeli Government and people to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to statehood, and to security within their homeland and the right of Palestinian refugees to return, thereby assuring the mutual recognition of the equal rights of both peoples. We demand the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories.

"We support the peace process which began in Madrid in 1991 under the sponsorship of the United States of America and the former Soviet Union as an attempt to reach a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. However, many obstacles have inhibited the success of this process. We affirm that any negotiating process leading to peace not only requires the recognition of the principles upon which these resolutions were founded as the basis of negotiation, but also requires the direct participation of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the effective participation of the United Nations and the inclusion of the European Community as co-sponsor. It is our conviction that the principles embodied in the call for a United Nations peace conference on the Middle East must be honoured in order to establish a just and lasting peace. We believe the lack of progress to date in the peace process is the direct responsibility of the Government of Israel with the support of the United States of America.

"We consider it most urgent that the United Nations provide immediate and sustained protection for the Palestinians under occupation. We call upon Israel to immediately recognize the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all the territories occupied since 1967 including East Jerusalem. The protections and guarantees of the Convention must be recognized and implemented without delay. We call upon the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to apply sanctions to ensure Israel's compliance with the provisions of that convention.

"We express our full support for the ongoing intifadah which constitutes the Palestinian people's inherent right to resist colonization and military occupation, consequently, Israel's efforts to suppress the intifadah are illegitimate:

"(a) Further, we urge that NGOs concerned with protection for the Palestinians, should establish permanent monitoring and witness groups in the occupied territories in order to enhance public awareness and to pressure Governments to urge Israel to end the occupation;

"(b) We condemn Israel's occupation and colonization of the Golan Heights, continuing brutal occupation of Southern Lebanon and its flagrant violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention in those regions.

"We denounce the settlements policy of the Israeli Government in the West Bank, Gaza and Golan Heights and the increased settlement activities in occupied East Jerusalem. These settlements are illegal and in violation of the Fourth Geneva convention of 1949 and United Nations Security Council resolution 465 (1980) and other relevant Security Council resolutions and should be dismantled. We strongly protest against the decision of the Administration of the Government of the United States of America to grant Israel 10 billion dollars in loan guarantees without any pledge from the Israeli Government that it will cease building settlements which are illegal in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. We do not accept the distinction between political and security settlements offered by the Israeli Government as it appears to be a tactic to avoid returning all the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, and remains an obstacle to peace. We call upon all Governments not to donate or pledge any financial or other support to Israel until it officially pledges to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem and in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

"We demand the implementation of the right of the Palestinians displaced since 1967 to return to their homes. In this context, we affirm the right of families to be reunited and to remain together in their homeland. We also call for the immediate return of all Palestinian deportees.

"We note that in spite of United Nations Security Council resolution 799 (1992), the expellees of December 1992 remain in exile in Lebanon. We condemn this arrogant refusal to observe this demand by the Security Council for their return. We call upon the Security Council to implement this resolution by taking all necessary measures to insure the immediate and safe return of the expellees and their protection against arbitrary arrest and detention.

"We also call upon Israel to recognize the rights of Palestinians who are citizens of Israel to full equality and the rights for which they have been struggling since 1948. We denounce the ongoing discrimination against Palestinians who are citizens of Israel. We condemn the Israeli confiscation of their lands which has recently been accelerated and the denial of legal municipal recognition to many Palestinian villages and communities in Israel. The national and human rights of the Palestinians who are citizens of Israel must be considered in any further comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem.

"We express our solidarity with Israeli peace forces struggling for the equality of all citizens of Israel and for an end to Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem and for the realization of the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people.

"We strongly condemn the continuing Israeli policy of systematic iron-fist repression against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory. We point out that at least 14,000 Palestinians remain imprisoned, although some have fully served the terms of their sentences.

"We condemn the summary executions carried out by the undercover army units in the occupied Palestinian territory. We demand that all operations as well as all standing orders and regulations relating to the undercover army units be canceled and that the so-called "special units" be disbanded immediately.

"We demand that Israel rescind all standing military orders that have codified human rights abuses and legalized them, particularly military orders that sanction administrative detention, restrictions of fundamental freedoms and rights such as free speech, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of movement and travel, academic freedom, excessive taxation and other severe restrictions on the free development of the economy and the society of the occupied Palestinian territories:

"(a) We demand that the Israeli authorities stop the killing and injuring of civilians, collective punishment, the sealing and demolition of houses, detention, torture and imprisonment without trial, expropriation of land and water resources, the closing of educational institutions and that curfews and restrictions on the free movements of Palestinians must end immediately;

"(b) We further call upon Israel to rescind its illegal closures of the occupied Palestinian territory and to permit the freedom of movement of Palestinians within those territories with free access to occupied East Jerusalem. We call for the support of all believers for whom Jerusalem is a living center of their faiths to protect the presence of Muslims and Christians against Israeli efforts to annex Arab East Jerusalem.

"We condemn Israel's recent massive aggression against Lebanon. We deplore the failure of the international community to take appropriate actions to protect the Lebanese and Palestinian civilians subjected to massive bombardment, displacement and dispossession. We call upon the Security Council to implement its resolution 425 (1978) requiring Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon.

"We support comprehensive measures to control and eliminate weapons of mass destruction world-wide, especially in the Middle East. The international community should strongly urge Israel to sign and ratify the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. We are concerned about the risks to the natural environment which Israel's continued nuclear weapons' programme poses. In this context NGOs are urged to support the campaign for Mordechai Vanunu's immediate release from the brutal and inhumane confinement he is suffering for alerting the world to the Israeli nuclear threat.

"We address a call to all the countries, especially the countries of the Gulf, which have drastically reduced their support to Palestinian organizations, to re-examine their position and renew their support to the Palestinian people and its sole legitimate representative, the PLO.

"We warmly thank the Committee for convening this international meeting and we greatly appreciate the presence of the Committee Delegation. We extend a warm thanks to His Excellency Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all others of the United Nations Secretariat, including the interpreters, who so valuably assisted us. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and added to our deliberations. We also address our appreciation to the Government of Austria for having generously hosted this Meeting.

"We request the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its Forty-eighth Session as part of the Committee's report."

III. SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS AFRICAN SEMINAR AND FOURTH AFRICAN NGO SYMPOSIUM HELD AT DAKAR, FROM 30 AUGUST TO 3 SEPTEMBER 1993

The Seventh United Nations African Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Thirty-fourth United Nations Seminar) and the Fourth African NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine were held at Dakar, from 30 August to 3 September 1993 in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/74 A of 11 December 1991. For the most part, the two events were combined.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising: Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and Chairman of the Seminar; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar; Mr. Nouhoum Samassekou (Mali), Vice-Chairman of the Seminar; Mr. Utoyo Yamtomo, Ambassador of Indonesia to Senegal; and, Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations.

A total of nine plenary meetings were held. Nineteen experts from the African continent, as well as Palestinians and Israelis, presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 23 Governments, 6 United Nations specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations, as well as 18 NGOs attended the Seminar and NGO Symposium.

At the opening of the Seminar and NGO Symposium, statements were made by the Minister of State and Minister for Presidential Affairs and Services of Senegal, Mr. Ousmane Tanor Dieng; the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Joseph Verner Reed; the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé; the representative of Palestine to Senegal, Mr. Said Abassi, who

read out a message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO; and, by the representative of the African Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, Mr. Ousmane Camara, Vice-President of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization (AAPSO).

Further statements were made on behalf of the Chairman of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries by Mr. Sayidiman Sunyohadirprodo (Indonesia) and by Mr. Adelaziz Abougosh, representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The theme of the Seminar and NGO Symposium was "Africa, the Middle East, and the Question of Palestine".

Four panels were established. The panels and their experts were as follows:

(a) Panel I: Towards a just solution of the question of Palestine

(i) The current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem

Mr. Ahmad Yaziji (Palestinian)
Mr. Eitan Felner (Israel)

(ii) The role of Africa in promoting a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the Question of Palestine

Mr. Hedi Ben Nasr (Tunisia)
Mr. Chitsaka Chipaziwa (Zimbabwe)
Mr. Dianguina dit Yaya Doucouré (Mali)
Mr. Latyr Kamara (Senegal)
Mr. K.B.S. Simpson (Ghana)

(iii) Regional organizations and the political, economic and human rights dimension of the question of Palestine

Mr. Khaled Mohammed Khaled (League of Arab States)

(b) Panel II: Building peace in Jerusalem - the Holy City of three religions

Rev. Father Bishara Al-Lahham (Palestinian)
Sheikh Ekrema Sabri (Palestinian)
Rabbi David Forman (Israel)

(c) Panel III: Towards self-determination and Statehood

(i) Palestine - Dynamics of State-building

Mr. Latif Dori (Israel)
Mr. Essa Moosa (South Africa)
Mr. O.R. Kaakunga (Namibia)

(ii) The role of the media and public opinion in nation-building

Mr. Bara Diouf (Senegal)
Mr. Mohamed Larbi Messari (Morocco)

(d) Panel IV: The need to revive the economy in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem

(i) Mobilization of international assistance to promote self-reliance and sustainable development

Mr. Ibrahim Dakkak (Palestinian)
Ms. Kathy Bergen (Canada)

In addition to the panels held jointly with the Seminar, two workshops specifically related to NGO activities were organized to consider the following topics:

(a) Actions by African NGOs to promote efforts to put an end to Israel's violations of human rights of the Palestinian people

Mr. Ousmane Camara (Guinea);

(b) Mobilization and networking by NGOs to promote a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the question of Palestine

Ms. Kathy Bergen (Canada).

The NGO participants adopted action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops. They also decided to extend the term of office of the African Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine until the next African Regional Symposium on the Question of Palestine and to increase its membership.

The Seminar and NGO Symposium adopted conclusions and recommendations as well as a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Senegal. The report containing the summaries of the presentations will be published in due course as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

"Conclusions and recommendations

"In accordance with its mandate, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People convened the African Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine at Dakar, Senegal, from 30 August to 3 September 1993. A number of African, Palestinian and Israeli experts, as well as representatives from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, were invited to participate. The Seminar and NGO Symposium had for its main theme "Africa, the Middle East and the Question of Palestine", and met in various panels relating to a just solution of the question of Palestine; Jerusalem; self-determination and Statehood; and the need to revive the economy of the occupied territory. Non-governmental organization workshops were also held to promote action by African NGOs on the question of Palestine. During the meeting, participants were also informed of new developments relating to the peace process and held an exchange of views thereon.

"Participants reviewed the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. They expressed grave concern at the continuing human rights abuses, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. They called on Israel, the occupying Power, to recognize the de jure applicability of the Convention to the occupied territory and to implement it immediately and fully. They considered that this was a fundamental obligation under international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. They called upon the international community, and the High Contracting Parties in particular, to assume their obligations under the Convention to ensure respect for its provisions in all circumstances, and to provide international protection for the Palestinians until the end of the occupation.

"Participants called on the Israeli Government to take a number of immediate measures as a step toward peace and reconciliation between the two peoples, in particular the release of all political prisoners and administrative detainees; the return of deportees; an end to the activities of undercover units and other repressive actions of the military forces; an end to the destruction of houses; as well as taking other measures to restore respect for human rights and lighten the burden of occupation during the transition period.

"Grave concern was expressed at the continued closure of the occupied territory and the separation of East Jerusalem from the West Bank which had resulted in dividing the occupied territory into four separate areas. Furthermore, this had caused loss of employment and hardships for large numbers of Palestinian workers, and had drastically limited access by Palestinians to places of worship, schools, health care facilities, and utility services. Participants were especially alarmed at reports of the dramatic situation in Gaza, in particular the grave aggravation in the health condition of the population, the environmental deterioration and lack of water. The participants called

for closer cooperation between NGOs and the Palestine Health Council to identify needs and assistance programmes. Israel was urgently called upon to end the blockade of the occupied territory and to restore full access to Jerusalem.

"Participants engaged in a frank and constructive debate on the role of Africa in promoting a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the question of Palestine as well as the role of regional organizations in this respect.

"It was pointed out that African countries, which were still for the most part under colonial rule at the time of the partition of Palestine in 1947, felt a fundamental kinship with the Palestinian people. Their solidarity was rooted in a moral and ethical position and a clear understanding of the historical and political situation. Following their independence and the establishment of the Organization of African Unity, the African countries had been able to lend increasingly concerted and coordinated support to the Palestinian struggle in the United Nations and other international fora. Participants acknowledged Africa's continued principled position and steadfast support for the achievement of Palestinian rights.

"Past experience and future possibilities in the relations between African and Arab countries were also reviewed. It was stressed that it was of the greatest importance to strengthen cooperation, economic and otherwise, between African and Arab countries, in order to stimulate mutually beneficial development.

"Participants appreciated and affirmed the continuing work and involvement of the African and international NGOs working on the question of Palestine. The importance of consolidating active channels of communication between Palestinian and African organizations was emphasized.

"Participants examined the problem of how to build peace in Jerusalem, Holy City of three religions and of great spiritual value, without monopoly by any quarter. The Israeli policy of annexation and judaization of Jerusalem, its encirclement with Jewish settlements and its separation from the rest of the occupied territories in recent months, caused the most serious concern. Participants stressed that a just solution regarding Jerusalem was indispensable for a settlement of the question of Palestine and called for an end to the policy of settlement, the reopening of the city, freedom of access to the holy places and respect for religious liberties, pending negotiations on a final settlement. Support was expressed in this regard for the work of the Al Quds Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Calls were also made for an effective involvement by leaders from the three religions in promoting a peaceful solution of the problem of Jerusalem.

"Participants discussed the achievement of the right to self-determination and independence of the Palestinian people and the dynamics of State and nation-building, including the role of the media and public opinion. It was emphasized that the right to self-determination was an inalienable right recognized in international law. Participants expressed support for the intifadah, through which the Palestinian people had expressed its national consensus in rejection of the occupation and for the establishment of a Palestinian State. The intifadah had also helped strengthen the institutional mechanisms and the social and political foundations for future statehood, under the leadership of the PLO.

"It was pointed out that there were many parallels between the struggle of the Palestinian people and that of the oppressed people of South Africa and that use could be made of their experience. The importance of providing information and mobilizing international sympathy and support for the Palestinian cause was stressed in this regard.

"It was also emphasized that the Palestinian information media, both in the occupied territories and in the diaspora, were playing an indispensable role in expressing the concerns and national personality of the Palestinian people and in keeping the national consciousness alive. The occupying Power was called upon to cease all harassment of Palestinian journalists and foreign journalists attempting to provide information on the situation in the occupied territory to the outside public. It was suggested to the Committee to organize a seminar with the participation of mass media from the African and other regions and representatives of the Palestinian media to discuss strategies and means of practical cooperation in order to advance the cause of the Palestinian people.

"Participants emphasized that a revival of the Palestinian economy and its independent development were essential underpinnings for the full exercise of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and the building of an independent State. Israel was called upon to end its policy of control and subordination of the Palestinian economy and resources, in particular water resources and land and to remove the obstacles to development projects by NGOs and other international donors. It was concluded that while immediate and substantial economic and financial assistance was desirable, only the end of occupation and the restoration to the Palestinian people of complete control over its national resources would ensure the realization of self-reliant and sustainable development.

"Participants called for unimpeded access of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to the occupied Palestinian territory in order to carry out their programmes and studies. The need was felt for the creation of an appropriate mechanism to undertake coordination between various donors and organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the PLO. It was suggested that the Committee organize under

its auspices round-tables on economic revitalization of the occupied Palestinian territory which would be of particular importance in the transitional period. Various practical measures to assist the Palestinian people living in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, were suggested such as twinning of towns and institutions like universities, hospitals and others, to provide for exchange of staff, students, teachers and various technical assistance. Participants called upon the international community, particularly the industrial countries, to increase their contribution to the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to enable UNRWA to fulfil its responsibility towards the Palestinian people.

"Participants were apprised of the turning point in the peace process which took place while the meeting was in progress, and the draft declaration of principles by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization providing for initial steps towards Palestinian self-government, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Jericho and the Gaza Strip and a framework for negotiations leading to a permanent settlement. In welcoming and supporting this evolution, they considered that courage and leadership were required at this crucial stage in the peace process. This development was viewed as a first step to a just and comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the realization of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

"They stressed that it was essential for the international community as a whole to intensify further its support for the Palestinian people and its legitimate representative, the PLO, during the difficult transition process ahead. They called for effective help to be given to the Palestinian people in constructing their future institutions and rebuilding their social infrastructure and economy, indispensable foundations for the full exercise of their inalienable rights.

"Participants reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards a just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine. In this regard they stressed the importance of the role of the United Nations in providing every assistance with the aim of contributing to the establishment of peace in the Middle East."

IV. SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON SITUATION IN THE PALESTINIAN AND OTHER ARAB TERRITORIES OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL

At its 27th meeting on 20 August 1993, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted the following resolution, (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/L.11/Add.1):

"1993/15. Situation in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel

"The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,

"Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in particular the principles of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples,

"Mindful of the principles and humanitarian provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the protection of war victims, of the principles and provisions of international law and of the obligations arising from the Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, annexed to the Hague Convention IV of 1907,

"Recalling that, in accordance with article 1 of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, all States parties to the Conventions have undertaken to respect and to ensure respect for the Conventions in all circumstances,

"Recalling also all the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights condemning the practices of the Israeli occupation authorities in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel which affirm the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to these territories, in particular resolution 1993/2 of 19 February 1993 of the Commission on Human Rights,

"Recalling further the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 605 (1987) of 22 December 1987, 607 (1988) of 5 January 1988, 608 (1988) of 14 January 1988, 636 (1989) of 6 July 1989, 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990, 726 (1992) of 6 January 1992 and 799 (1992) of 6 December 1992,

"Noting with great concern the report submitted to the Security Council by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 799 (1992) (S/25149), which affirmed that Israel continued to refuse to comply with the resolutions of the Council and recommended that the Council take the necessary measures to ensure that its decision, as set out in resolution 799 (1992), was respected,

"Taking note of the reports of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories submitted to the General Assembly and the relevant reports of the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization,

"Recalling with great concern the press releases issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva on 13 January 1988, on 18 and 19 August 1988 and on 21 May 1992 and the statement of the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross on 23 May 1993, concerning the continuing violations by Israel of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, including the deportation of Palestinian citizens from their territory, the killing of civilians, including children, and the application of the policy of collective punishment against the Palestinian people,

"Reaffirming its previous resolutions in this respect, the most recent being resolution 1992/10 of 26 August 1992,

"Deeply alarmed at the persistent refusal of Israel to respect the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to apply it to the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories, and at the systematic and established violations of human rights by Israel over the past 26 years and its persistence in killing, wounding and arresting Palestinian people and in deporting and expelling Palestinian citizens,

"Taking into account the ongoing process of negotiation between the parties concerned since the Peace Conference on the Middle East convened at Madrid, and encouraging this process to reach speedily a just and lasting peace settlement on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and all other relevant United Nations resolutions,

"1. Reaffirms that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, itself constitutes a gross and systematic violation of human rights and an aggression under international law;

"2. Also reaffirms that the continued perpetration by the Israeli occupation authorities of deliberate killings of Palestinians, including children, breaking limbs of young men and causing grave harm to their physical integrity, subjecting cities, villages and camps to living conditions designed to strangulate and destroy them by imposing curfews, as happened in the Gaza Strip on 25 May 1992, and preventing their provision with food and medical supplies, firing gas bombs into houses, mosques, churches and hospitals, thus causing the death of many people by asphyxia, severely beating pregnant women and throwing gas bombs inside their homes, thereby causing them to miscarry, torturing Palestinian detainees, imposing collective punishment and administrative detention upon thousands of Palestinians, expelling and deporting Palestinians from their homeland, confiscating land and establishing Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, bringing Jewish immigrants from several parts of the world and settling them on these territories, thus modifying their demographic character, closing schools and universities, desecrating holy places and demolishing

houses, all constitute grave violations of the principles of international law and the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

"3. Further reaffirms that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the Palestinians and to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel, and that the continued disregard and rejection of the provisions of the Convention by Israel constitute gross violations of the principles of international law, and that it is therefore the responsibility of the international community to provide protection for the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the provisions of the Convention, until the end of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories;

"4. Calls upon the States parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, to apply article 1 of the Convention, to ensure respect by Israel for the Convention and to secure protection for the Palestinian people under occupation, until the end of this occupation;

"5. Reaffirms once again the right of the Palestinian people to resist the Israeli occupation by all means, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, and affirms that the intifadah of the Palestinian people, which began on 8 December 1987, is one such means confirming their determination to liberate their land from Israeli occupation and to exercise their inalienable national rights on their national soil, above all their right to self-determination;

"6. Also reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 12 December 1948, to self-determination without foreign interference and to establish their independent sovereign State on their national soil, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Commission on Human Rights;

"7. Condemns the policy of Israel for:

"(a) Its gross violations of the rules of international law and of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and calls upon Israel to desist immediately from those practices and to withdraw from the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories, in accordance with the principles of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions;

"(b) Continuing the policy of deporting Palestinian citizens and for expelling them from their homeland, as happened to more than 400 Palestinian citizens on 17 December 1992, and calls upon Israel to comply with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the most recent being resolution 799 (1992) of 18 December 1992, as well as with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, and to refrain from such a policy, which violates the principles of international law;

"(c) Establishing Israeli settlements in the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories and calls for them to be dismantled, and confirms that all measures taken by Israel with the purposes of annexing these territories or altering the political, cultural, religious or other character of Jerusalem and the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 are illegal, null and void;

"(d) Its continued occupation of the Syrian Golan and its defiance of the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981) of 17 December 1981, and reaffirms that the decision by Israel in 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void;

"(e) The inhuman treatment and terrorist practices in violation of human rights which the Israeli occupation authorities continue to exercise against Syrian Arab citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan for their refusal to carry Israeli identity cards and in order to force them to carry such cards, practices which constitute a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and requests all States and competent international organizations not to recognize any Israeli laws, jurisdiction or administration in respect of the occupied Syrian territory;

"8. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Sub-Commission, at its forty-sixth session, with an updated list of reports, studies, statistics and other documents relating to the question of Palestine and other occupied Arab territories, with the texts of the most recent relevant United Nations decisions and resolutions and the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and with all other information relevant to the implementation of the present resolution."

V. EXCERPT FROM THE DECLARATION OF THE NINETEENTH ECONOMIC SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF SEVEN MAJOR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY HELD AT TOKYO FROM 7 TO 9 JULY 1993

"...

"We fully support the efforts to achieve a comprehensive, lasting peace settlement in the Middle East, and call on Israel and the Arab states to take further steps for confidence-building. We reiterate that the Arab boycott should end. We call on Israel to respect its obligations with regard to their occupied territories. We support the efforts of reconstruction in Lebanon." (See A/48/353-S/26373, annex II, par. 9)

VI. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION

In the course of August, the following information was received by the Division for Palestinian Rights:

1. La Paix en Mouvement, article on Palestine available in September/October issue. Available from: 139, Boulevard Victor Hugo, F-93-400 Saint Ouen, CCP 780-56 Z, France.

2. Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, available from: The American Educational Trust, P.O. Box 53062, Washington, D.C. 20009, United States of America.

3. ADC Times, publication of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Available from: 4201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20008, United States of America.

4. Israel and Palestine Political Report, available from: Magelan and Association Mashdek Développement, ISSN 0294 1341, Boite Postale 130, 75463 Paris CEDEX 10, France.

5. The Middle East, monthly publication available from: IC Publications Ltd., 7 Coldbath Square, London EC1R 4LQ, United Kingdom.

6. Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, briefing paper entitled "From Shamir to Rabin: What chance for peace?", available from: 21, Collingham Road, London SW5 ONV, United Kingdom.

7. Middle East International, biweekly publication, available from: P.O. Box 53365, Temple Heights Station, Washington, D.C. 20009, United States of America.

8. The Other Front, weekly bulletin on developments in Israeli society, available from: The Alternative Information Centre, P.O. Box 24278, Jerusalem.

9. The Other Israel, newsletter of the Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, available from: P.O. Box 2542, Holon, Israel 58125.

10. "Surveillance and Defamation, Arab-American Political Rights in Times of Crisis", special report of the Arab-American Institute, available from: 918 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Suite 601, Washington, D.C. 20077-2505.

11. Samed, Palestinian Prison Voices, Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners, available from: P.O. Box 19543, Jerusalem, Israel.

12. April 17, quarterly publication by the Alternative Information Centre, P.O. Box 31417, Jerusalem.

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UNITED NATIONS

DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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I. COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE REVIEWS DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PEACE PROCESS

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held its 200th meeting on 16 September 1993. The Chairman reported on the European NGO Symposium and the International NGO Meeting held at Vienna from 23 to 27 August, as well as the African Seminar and NGO Symposium held at Dakar from 30 August to 3 September 1993. The Chairman stressed that in the light of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed by the PLO and Israel on 13 September, the United Nations must continue and intensify its involvement in the question of Palestine in the difficult period ahead. The Committee would continue to strengthen its efforts to monitor the situation on the ground, to bring new developments affecting Palestinian rights to the attention of the international community and to mobilize public opinion and action in support of the Palestinian people.

The Committee heard a statement by the Observer for Palestine to the United Nations, Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, concerning the new developments.

As summarized in a press release, (see GA/PAL/638), he said:

"...

"The recent events in Washington required some comprehensive clarification with regard to background, the document arrived at, Chairman Yasser Arafat's meeting with the Secretary-General, and the Palestinian position in the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

"Many contacts between the PLO and some Israelis had been made, he said. The PLO had a clear-cut political stand, but complications had arisen on the Israeli side. The door had been opened when the Israeli Knesset revoked the law banning contacts with the PLO. Most contacts which ensued had been made through the "Oslo channel" since the beginning of this year. A specific text was agreed to and was signed by both sides and the events in Washington ensued.

"The declaration of principles signed in Washington was not a treaty, he said. It dealt with the establishment of self-rule and laid the basis for negotiations based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also provided for complete Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho. The declaration, which would take effect on 13 October, was a far-reaching one. The pull-out of troops would be completed in about four months. Once troop withdrawal was complete, democratic elections would be held in all territories and Palestinians from Jerusalem would participate in that process. Israeli troops would then pull out from densely occupied territories and would be repositioned in certain parts of the occupied territories.

"During that period, Palestinians drawn largely from the PLO army, would serve as police, he said. An agreement on the return of refugees - some half-million to 700,000 citizens - would follow. Other important issues would be settled through negotiations. They concerned Jerusalem, the settlements, boundaries and refugees.

"The PLO believed that the declaration of principles was a step on the road to peace, he went on. It represented a new beginning for the region. A long, difficult road lay ahead and international assistance would be needed. Negotiations would soon be held on implementing the declaration. That process would be a critical litmus test. The Palestinians stood ready to do their part.

"When Chairman Arafat met with Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, he had demonstrated the paramount importance of the United Nations, which must attend fully to the peace process. Chairman Arafat had expressed the wish that the United Nations would play a wide-ranging role in the transition process, including through the provision of technical assistance. It was hoped that the negotiations would open the way for military observers to be deployed to the area. The Secretary-General had responded positively to those sentiments stating that he would send a delegation to the occupied territories to evaluate the situation there and to render assistance.

"With respect to the upcoming General Assembly, he said the PLO would be ready to put an end to the state of antagonism by considering a departure from the usual United Nations resolutions. The United Nations must play a central role in implementing the declaration of principles. It must continue to seek a final settlement that would recognize the right of the Palestinian people to their own state. "Our stance is a balanced one that is also acceptable. It takes into account positive developments while upholding basic principles." He lauded the Committee for its long-standing support and stated that its work would be needed in the future."

In conclusion, the Chairman expressed great satisfaction with developments regarding the question of Palestine.

He subscribed to the feeling of hope expressed by various members and observers of the Committee (Sri Lanka, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Egypt, Pakistan) who had stressed their support for the Palestinian people. (See press release GA/PAL/638)

II. DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON INTERIM SELF-GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION ISSUED AS UNITED NATIONS DOCUMENT

In a joint letter by the Permanent Representatives of the United States of America and the Russian Federation, as co-sponsors of the Madrid peace process and witnesses to the signing in Washington on 13 September, by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its annexes and agreed minutes, as well as in similar letters by the Permanent Representative of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine, all dated 8 October 1993, the Secretary-General was requested to circulate that document as an official document of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 10, ("Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization"), and of the Security Council.

The full text of the Declaration, annexes and minutes, together with the accompanying letters, was issued under the symbol A/48/486-S/26560. Copies of the document can be obtained from the Division for Palestinian Rights.

III. EXCERPT FROM THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session and issued prior to the new developments in the peace process, contained the following paragraphs relating to the question of Palestine (see A/48/1 paras. 377 to 379):

"...

"In the course of the past year, the plight of the Palestinian people living under occupation has not been alleviated. There has, moreover, been a dramatic worsening of the human rights situation in the occupied territories. In a particularly grave incident, Israel deported over 400 Palestinian civilians to southern Lebanon in December 1992. The Security Council, in its resolution 799 (1992), inter alia reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, demanded that Israel ensure the safe and immediate return to the occupied territories of all those deported, and requested me to send a representative to the area and to report to the Council. Conscious of the possible effect of that event on the fragile process of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, and with a view to finding a solution, I dispatched several missions to the area, led respectively by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and my Special Political Adviser. I had a number of meetings and telephone conversations with leaders in the region and representatives of interested Governments. Regrettably, those efforts were not successful and, in my report to the Security Council of 25 January 1993 (S/25149), I recommended that the Council should take

whatever measures were required to ensure that its unanimous decision was respected.

"I have also been seriously alarmed by the reports of the rapid worsening of the socio-economic situation in the occupied territories. As the Palestinian economy is weak and highly dependent on that of Israel, the livelihood of the Palestinian communities suffered further damage when Israel closed off the occupied territories in March 1993. I have appealed to the international community to provide greater economic assistance to the occupied territories. In this connection, I have also reminded the major donors of the critical financial situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

"Because of the long-standing commitment of the United Nations to a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), I welcomed the invitation extended in October 1992 by the co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process for the participation of the United Nations as a full extraregional participant in the multilateral working groups on environment, economic and regional development, water, refugees, arms control and regional security in the Middle East. Representatives of the United Nations attended and took an active part in the meetings of the working groups held in October-November 1992 in Paris, The Hague and Ottawa and in April-May 1993 at Geneva, Rome, Oslo, Washington and Tokyo. In November 1992, I appointed Chinmaya Gharekhan as my Special Representative at the multilateral talks."

IV. STATEMENTS ISSUED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IN CONNECTION WITH THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT

The following statement was issued by a spokesman for the Secretary-General on 1 September 1993:

"The Secretary-General has studied the text of the draft Israeli-Palestinian agreement issued yesterday. He congratulates the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestinian delegation and expresses the hope that they will sign the agreement so that it may enter into force soon.

"The Secretary-General notes that the draft accord envisages an international presence in connection with its implementation. Once the agreement has been signed, and should the two parties so request, the United Nations will be ready to provide assistance in every possible way in the areas specified in the agreement in order to contribute to the establishment of peace in the Middle East, in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations." (See SG/SM/5073)

Later, on 9 September 1993, the following was issued:

"In an effort to support the momentum in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, and in response to requests he has received from PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs Shimon Peres, the Secretary-General last night established a high-level task force whose focus will be the economic and social development of the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

"Members of the task force include UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth, UNICEF Executive Director James Grant, UNRWA Commissioner-General Ilter Türkmen, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs James Jonah and special political adviser to the Secretary-General Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan.

"The priorities of the task force, whose work begins immediately, will be the following: to establish an integrated United Nations approach towards development in these areas, with a particular focus on Gaza, where needs are greatest; to coordinate with other institutions, agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in ongoing development projects so as to avoid a duplication of efforts; and to mobilize international financial support for this process. The task force will prepare proposals for the Secretary-General before the start of the General Assembly." (See SG/SM/5077)

A further statement was issued on 15 September 1993:

"Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met this evening at United Nations Headquarters with Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

"The two men first met in a tête-à-tête, and were then joined by their respective delegations. The Secretary-General's delegation included Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan, his special political adviser, and James O.C. Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Mr. Arafat's delegation comprised members of the PLO Executive Committee: Mahmoud Abbas, Yasser Abed-Rabbo, Yasser Amer and Jaweed El-Ghussein; PLO spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi; and Palestine's Permanent Observer to the United Nations Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa.

"The Secretary-General congratulated Mr. Arafat on the historic agreement between the PLO and Israel which, he said, would benefit not only Palestinians and Israelis, but would serve also as a model to the international community on the peaceful settlement of conflicts and disputes.

"The Secretary-General confirmed to Mr. Arafat that the United Nations system was ready to assist in the implementation of the agreement. The United Nations would coordinate assistance from its agencies and programmes. A special coordinator would be appointed to liaise with the parties concerned.

"The Secretary-General acknowledged the reference to an international presence in the PLO-Israeli agreement and assured Mr. Arafat that the United Nations would be prepared to provide electoral assistance if needed. A task force for development assistance to Gaza and the West Bank has been formed, and it was agreed that a technical mission would be dispatched to Tunis within the next few weeks for discussions with PLO officials.

"Mr. Arafat expressed his gratitude to the Secretary-General for the positive role of the United Nations and underlined the importance he attached to the role of the Organization in the implementation of the PLO-Israeli agreement." (See SG/SM/5088)

V. STATEMENTS BY THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY CONCERNING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT

The following statement was issued by the Presidency on 21 August 1993:

"The Israeli-Palestinian agreement in principle constitutes a historic step towards the establishment of peace in this sorely tried region.

"The European Community and its member States pay tribute to the vision and courage of the Israeli and Palestinian leaders who have managed to overcome numerous and thorny obstacles in order to lay the foundations for a better future for both their peoples. They are prepared to facilitate the implementation and success of this agreement.

"The European Community and its member States take this opportunity to reiterate their total support for the Middle East peace process, initiated at Madrid, with a view to its resulting, through full application of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in a global, just and lasting solution to the whole Israeli-Arab conflict." (See A/47/1008-S/26396)

On 13 September 1993, the Presidency issued the following statement:

"The European Community and its member States pay tribute to the vision and courage of the Israeli and Palestinian leaders who signed this historic agreement, which represents a positive breakthrough in the peace process.

"The European Community and its member States offer their continuing political support and readiness to participate in further international arrangements arising in connection with implementation of the agreement.

"Stressing the fact that the Community and its member States are already the largest net contributor to the occupied territories, the Community and its member States announce their intention to continue to be a substantive contributor. The European Community is ready to offer a package of immediate aid of 20 million

ECU and to discuss medium-term aid with Palestinian institutions as they are formed.

"The European Community and its member States reiterate their commitment to a comprehensive peace and hope that progress will be accomplished in other bilateral negotiations and in the multilateral talks on future cooperation. As a chairman of the Regional Economic Development Working Group, the European Community and its member States are prepared to contribute to all forms of regional economic cooperation." (See A/47/1019-S/26447)

VI. EXCERPT FROM FINAL COMMUNIQUE OF THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

After meeting on 5 and 6 September 1993, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Gulf Cooperation Council issued a communiqué on their work which contained the following passage:

"...The Ministerial Council is closely following developments in the Middle East peace process. It expresses its satisfaction at the resumption of bilateral negotiations in the eleventh round and affirms the contents of its statement of 5 September 1993, which welcomes the draft agreement reached by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel as a first step towards a just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of land for peace, the achievement of a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, and from Jerusalem first and foremost, the guaranteeing of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination, and the establishment of firm foundations on which to guarantee security and stability in the Middle East.

"The Council reaffirms its continued support for peace efforts undertaken in conformity with agreed foundations and principles and keenly hopes that the negotiations will produce substantial progress in all fields, thus moving the peace process forward." (See A/48/379-S/26411)

VII. EXCERPT FROM STATEMENT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

A meeting of the Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the members of the Committee on Palestine of the Non-Aligned Movement took place in New York on 28 September 1993 to consider the new developments relating to the question of Palestine. The final statement includes the following:

"The Committee was briefed on the recent developments, in particular the signing on 13 September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

"The Committee welcomed that important step and expressed the hope that the declaration will be fully implemented. They expressed their support for the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, in its efforts to build a Palestinian national authority on Palestinian soil, including Jerusalem, towards the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The Committee emphasized the need for the early commencement of the permanent status negotiations on the basis of international legitimacy, which shall cover the remaining issues, including: Jerusalem refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbours, and other issues of common interest. The Committee also hailed the sacrifices made by the Palestinian people in their long struggle to achieve their inalienable rights, and reaffirmed the position of principle of the Non-Aligned Movement in support of the implementation of those inalienable rights.

"The Committee stressed the need to expeditiously take further steps with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which are essential for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, which include the withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories including the Syrian Golan Heights, Southern Lebanon and Jerusalem.

"The Committee further reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is solved in all its aspects, and stressed the need for an effective and broad role for the United Nations in the peace process and in providing all kinds of assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee welcomed the steps taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in this regard.

"The Committee decided to continue to monitor closely the developments concerning the implementation of the Declaration of Principles in accordance with its mandate." (See A/48/455-S/26502)

VIII. OTHER STATEMENTS ISSUED ON THE OCCASION OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT

A number of Governments and intergovernmental organizations circulated statements at the United Nations supporting the Israeli-Palestinian agreement and expressing the hope that it would lead to a just and lasting peace in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The following were issued:

- Communiqué issued by Mr. Abdou Diouf in his dual capacity as Chairman of the Sixth Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and President of the Republic of Senegal (A/47/1017)
- Press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore (A/48/488-S/26563)
- Press release issued by the Government of El Salvador (A/48/481-S/26548)
- Statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar (A/48/450)
- Statement issued by Government of Ghana and letter from the President of that country (A/48/459)
- Statement issued by the official spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India (S/26459)-
- Statement issued by the Government of India (A/47/1024)
- Statement issued by the Government of Thailand (A/48/437-S/26494)
- Statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Bolivia (A/47/1021)
- Statement made by the President of the Philippines (A/48/429)
- Letter from the President of Madagascar (A/48/415-S/26473 and A/48/410-S/26465)
- Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia (A/47/1020-S/26453)
- Communiqué issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela (A/47/1018-S/26443)
- Statement by the Government of Brunei Darussalam (A/48/487-S/26505)
- Statement by the official spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India (S/26459)
- Statement from the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (press release NY/OAU/BUR/36/93)

IX. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION

In the course of September, the following information was received by the Division for Palestinian Rights:

1. La Paix en Mouvement, article on Palestine available in September/ October issue. Available from: 139, Boulevard Victor Hugo, F-93-400 Saint Ouen, CCP 780-56 Z, France.

2. Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, available from: The American Educational Trust, P.O. Box 53062, Washington, D.C. 20009, United States of America.

3. ADC Times, publication of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Available from: 4201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20008, United States of America.

4. Israel and Palestine Political Report devoted to "The Israel-PLO Accord - A New Era", available from: Magelan and Association Mashdek Développement, ISSN 0294 1341, Boite Postale 130, 75463 Paris CEDEX 10, France.

5. The Middle East, monthly publication available from: IC Publications Ltd., 7 Coldbath Square, London EC1R 4LQ, United Kingdom.

6. Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, briefing paper entitled "From Shamir to Rabin: What chance for peace?", available from: 21, Collingham Road, London SW5 ONV, United Kingdom.

7. Middle East International, biweekly publication, available from: P.O. Box 53365, Temple Heights Station, Washington, D.C. 20009, United States of America.

8. The Other Front, weekly bulletin on developments in Israeli society, available from: The Alternative Information Centre, P.O. Box 24278, Jerusalem.

9. The Other Israel, newsletter of the Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, available from: P.O. Box 2542, Holon, Israel 58125.

10. "Surveillance and Defamation, Arab-American Political Rights in Times of Crisis", special report of the Arab-American Institute, available from: 918 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Suite 601, Washington, D.C. 20077-2505.

11. Samed, Palestinian Prison Voices, Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners, available from: P.O. Box 19543, Jerusalem, Israel.

12. April 17, quarterly publication by the Alternative Information Centre, P.O. Box 31417, Jerusalem.

13. News from Within, newsletter of the Alternative Information Center, P.O. Box 31417, Jerusalem, Vol. IX, No. 9 containing an article on "The Oslo Agreement".

14. North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (NACC), The Fax Tree, "Special Report on Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles", available from: NACC, 1747 Connecticut Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20009.

15. Palestine Human Rights Information Center (PHRIC) of the Arab Studies Society, "PHRIC Statement: Human Rights Issues After the Agreement on the Declaration of Principles", available from: PHRIC, P.O. Box 20479, Jerusalem.

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